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4-H CLUBS AND LOCAL LEADERS ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY RECREATION

A radio talk by L. R. Harrill, State Club Leader, Raleigh, North Carolina, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program August 4, 1934 and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

Seven years ago today a small group of 24 selected leaders assembled under a spreading Elm tree on the campus of the North Carolina State College of Agriculture to listen to a lecture on Recreation given by John Bradford of the National Recreation Association. That was the beginning of organized recreation with the 4-H clubs in our State. Visualizing the scope of the work and the magnitude of the task to be done it was imperative that leaders be trained to carry this work to the rural people. From that small beginning we have seen the recreation program carried to practically every community in the state. The work of the leaders was largely responsible for the results accomplished. Their work has been popular because it filled a great need in the home and community and because the programs were planned for little or no cost to the people participating and because of the leaders undying enthusiasm for the project undertaken.

Just yesterday we concluded our annual farm and homeweek at State college. Preceding that _____ 4-H club members and leaders assembled for their annual club week. A splendid program of recreation including community singing, athletic tournaments, dramatizations, 4-H club plays, folk dancing, and organized play with thousands of people participating. A concrete demonstration of what a group of leaders can grow into.

Our leaders have planned and organized their programs to develop the individual morally, mentally, and physically. Morally by teaching fair play, honesty, and true sportsmanship; mentally by stimulating quick thinking and coordinated action; and physically by bringing out the best there is in the individual. The recreation programs are also planned to and do teach community cooperation. In a larger measure recreation does for the community what it does for an individual and is therefore reflected in a greater home life and in the activities of the community.

Play more and live more is our recreation slogan, but play at the proper time and in the proper place. We farm folks have long wished for leisure time. Now it has struck like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky and found us wholly unprepared to take advantage of the cultural values inherent in leisure time. With our program of controlled production and the advance of the machine age we find ourselves with more leisure time. We have learned how to work and now we must learn how to play and teach others how to play. And as we have taken the drudgery out of our work we must take the poison and peril out of idleness. To develop a more wholesome community life at this time is a challenge which cannot be denied. In meeting this challenge the 4-H clubs have gone about the task with the full realization that he who selects directs and therefore every program has been planned to fit the group for whom it was intended.

In one of our counties, Iredell, there is a 4-H recreational council five year old which has met regularly during that five year period searching for new material and preparing themselves for the task of carrying this work to the people in their county. In so doing they have shown the people in their county that there is more than drudgery on the farm. They have gone into every community in the county carrying recreation and inspiration. They

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have gone into other counties carrying their message of cheer and happiness.

This is not true in every county but it could be and is a goal to strive for, and it can be accomplished.

The recreation as conducted has proved to be more than a good time for the group. A study of the communities and clubs active in recreation shows that the club members in these clubs score highest in the number of projects and the type of projects completed. So this program has been and is a recreation in the hearts and minds of the people, to a general awakening that there is honor in honest work and that there is dignity in the worthy use of leisure.